

Message Text

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ACTION SCS-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0753

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:CASC (MARTIN, GARY S.)

SQBJ:W/W CASE OF GARY S. MARTIN

REFS: (A) STATE 104520; (B) BRIDGETOWN 0152

1. DCM SIMMS VISITED ANTIGUA LAST WEEK AND, WHILE THERE, SAW MARTIN, DISCUSSED STATE OF HIS HEALTH WITH DR. WISINGER, AND PURSUED WITH DEPUTY PREMIER LESTER BIRD QUESTIONS OF MARTIN'S RELEASE AND TRANSPORTATION TO PUERTO RICO. VISITING MARTIN IN GENERAL HOSPITAL ON MAY 6, SIMMS LEARNED THAT WISINGER WOULD BE LEAVING ANTIGUA ON MAY 9 TO ATTEND TWO-WEEK PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE IN U.S. (MARTIN HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED FROM MENTAL HOSPITAL FOR INTRAVENOUS FEEDING AFTER HE HAD REFUSED TO TAKE FOOD FOR SEVERAL DAYS.) CONCERNED LEST WISINGER'S ABSENCE BE DETRIMENTAL TO MARTIN'S HEALTH AND SEEING WISINGER'S DEPARTURE AS OFFERING OPPORTUNITY TO SPEED UP RESOLUTION OF MARTIN'S CASE, SIMMS TOLD WISINGER THAT EMBASSY HAD REQUESTED GOA TO ARRANGE FOR PRIVATE AIR TRANSPORTATION TO PUERTO RICO (PLANE OWNED BY US NAVAL OFFICER HAS BEEN GROUNDED SINCE REF (B) SENT) AND ASKED WHETHER HE WOULD BE WILLING TO ACCOMPANY MARTIN AS FAR AS PUERTO RICO, IF APPROPRIATE TRANSPORTATION ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE MADE FOR MAY 9 DEPARTURE. AFTER SOME HISITATION, BASED APPARENTLY ON HIS BELIEF THAT MARTIN'S RELEASE WILL BE KNOWN PUBLICLY SOONER OR LATER AND FEAR HIS OWN ROLE IN CASE MAY BE CRITICIZED, WISINGER ASSENTED.

2. SIMMS THEN APPROACHED BIRD WITH PROPOSAL THAT GOA ARRANGE FOR MARTIN'S RELEASE AND TRANSPORTATION TO PUERTO RICO ON
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MAY 9, POINTING OUT DESIRABILITY OF TAKING ADVANTAGE OF

WISINGER'S AVAILABILITY AND PROBLEMS THAT MIGHT ARISE FROM DELAYING MARTIN'S DEPARTURE, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW HIS RECENT HUNGER STRIKE. BIRD REPLIED THAT PROPOSAL TO RELEASE MARTIN REQUIRED CONCURRENCE OF FULL CABINET AND THAT MATTER THUS FAR KNOWN ONLY TO A FEW MINISTERS. AT SIMMS' URGING, HE AGREED, HOWEVER, TO BRING QUESTION BEFORE CABINET AT MEETING TO BE HELD THAT AFTERNOON. ON MORNING MAY 7, SIMMS AGAIN MET WITH BIRD AND WAS INFORMED CABINET HAD DISCUSSED QUESTION BUT REACHED NO DECISION. FURTHER DISCUSSION WOULD TAKE PLACE AT MEETING LATER IN THE DAY.

3. FOLLOWING MAY 7 CABINET MEETING, SIMMS CALLED BIRD BY TELEPHONE; LATTER SAID IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR MARTIN TO LEAVE ANTIGUA ON MAY 9. THOUGH AT FIRST RELUCTANT TO STATE WHY, BIRD FINALLY INDICATED THAT MAJORITY OF CABINET PREFERRED TO AWAIT RETURN TO BARBADOS OF ATTORNEY JACK DEAR ON MAY 10 AND CONCLUSION, THROUGH DEAR, OF ARRANGEMENTS TO COMPENSATE INJURED POLICEMAN AND WIFE OF SLAIN TAXI DRIVER. HE EXPRESSED HOPE MARTIN'S RETURN TO US COULD BE EFFECTED IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS.

4. AMBASSADOR WILL BE VISITING ANTIGUA THIS COMING WEEKEND AND WILL CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS WITH GOA CONCERNING MARTIN'S RELEASE AND TRANSFER.
BRITTON

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